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Economic and Social Council

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Commission on Population and Development
Forty-third session
3 April 2009
Item 1 of the provisional agenda*
Election of officers

Letter dated 2 April 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Jordan to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Chairman of the Group of Arab States at the United Nations for the month of April 2009, I write to draw your attention to the following. It has come to the attention of the Arab Group at the United Nations, Algeria, Bahrain, the Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Mauritania, Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, the Sudan, the Syrian Arab Republic, Tunisia, the United Arab Emirates and Yemen, that the Group of Western European and other States have nominated Israel, the occupying Power, for the chairmanship of the forty-third session of the Commission on Population and Development.

As a matter of principle, the Arab Group respects decisions by regional groups on candidatures. At the same time, the Arab Group is deeply concerned that the representative of Israel, as Chair of the Commission on Population and Development, will have a negative impact on the Commission's work and on the Commission's credibility, given this country's demonstrated hindrance of development and grave violations of the rights of the Arab populations in the occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the occupied Syrian Golan and the remaining Lebanese occupied territory. The Arab Group thus wishes to clearly state its strong objection to this nomination as we believe it contravenes with the purposes and principles upon which this commission was established.

Israel's appalling record of violations of the rights of the Arab populations under its occupation and its contempt for United Nations resolutions and international law are widely documented in numerous United Nations reports. In *this regard, and in relation* to the work of the Commission on Population and Development, we wish to underscore the following.

One of the primary roles of the Commission on Population and Development is following up the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International

* See E/CN.9/2009/L.2.

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Conference on Population and Development. The Programme of Action states, among other things, that the human person is the central subject of development; that the principles of the right to development is an integral part of fundamental human rights; that sustainable development is a means to ensure human well-being; that everyone has the right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standards of physical and mental health as well as the right to education; that children have the right to protection, health and education; and that all peoples have the right to sustained economic growth. These rights and principles are gravely violated in the Occupied Palestinian Territory because of the systematic and wilful policies of Israel, the occupying Power. These policies have imposed a state of de-development, poverty and hunger on Palestinians, as outlined in countless United Nations documents (including A/63/35, A/63/273, A/63/518, A/63/75 and A/63/74).

Most recently, Israel, the occupying Power, launched a vicious and criminal war against 1.5 million Palestinians in Gaza, kept under an illegal and crippling Israeli siege. According to human rights organizations and the United Nations Special Rapporteur on human rights in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, the Israeli conduct during this war amounts to flagrant war crimes. Even the accounts of Israeli occupation soldiers who perpetrated these crimes corroborate these severe charges. Nominating a country that stands accused of war crimes, which includes wilfully targeting the civilian population, as well as the infrastructure, schools, hospitals, economic institutions and United Nations buildings, would send an unacceptable message to the millions of people who count on this Commission to better their lives and offer their children a brighter future.

As an occupying Power and major violator of international law and United Nations resolutions, including those that relate to population and development, Israel lacks the qualities needed in a chair of a United Nations commission and thus will not be able to perform its duties in the manner and impartiality expected of the country assuming such an important role.

Based on the aforementioned grounds, the Arab Group absolutely disagrees with this nomination. In this regard, we call upon members of the Commission on Population and Development to uphold the purposes and principles that guide the work of the Commission and to carefully consider this nomination.

The Arab Group kindly requests that the present letter be distributed as a document of the Commission on Population and Development, under agenda item 1 of the provisional agenda of the forty-third session of the Commission on Population and Development.

(*Signed*) Mohammed F. **Al-Allaf**

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Commission on Population and Development
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3 April 2009
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Election of officers

Letter dated 7 April 2009 from the Permanent Representative of Israel to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I write to you regarding Israel's recent election to the chairmanship of the forty-third session of the Commission on Population and Development.

As you are well aware, the State of Israel was nominated by the Western European and Other States Group as part of the normal, rotating chairmanship of the Commission. This nomination is the result of a routine procedural process to ensure that the work of the Commission continues in an operative and helpful manner. It is disturbing that the Arab Group at the United Nations decided to politicize this process and the work of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies by objecting to the nomination of the Western European and Other States Group.

In both a national capacity and with regard to its outreach to partner countries, Israel places particular emphasis on the human person as the central subject of development and shares the belief that sustainable development is an important principle to ensure human well-being.

Israel has consistently contributed to the work of social and economic development at the United Nations, and its chairmanship of the Commission is a natural continuation of its tradition in such fields. In 2007, the General Assembly adopted a resolution initiated and sponsored by Israel on agricultural technology for development. It was a resolution in which Israel, along with the wider international community, offered concrete ways to aid developing countries in the field of sustainable agriculture. Unfortunately, the same countries that have now opposed Israel's chairmanship also called for a vote on the aforementioned resolution in 2007, another example of how narrow political objectives can slow — and even stall — the important work of the United Nations.

I would like to add that Israel is a country that has developed extensive and sophisticated technologies and is a source of knowledge that aids international

* E/CN.9/2009/L.2.

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development, including in the fields of agriculture, water technology, desertification, medicine, public health, education and information technology. In fact, many of Israel's neighbours have enjoyed benefits from these developments. I wish to note that Israel will continue to research and apply new innovations in these fields and share the benefits with the global community.

In response to the letter of protest by the Arab Group (E/CN.9/2009/8), I wish to assure you, as well as all members of the Commission, that Israel will continue, as it has done in the past, to contribute to the work of the United Nations, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission in a professional and robust manner.

Israel would kindly request that the present letter be distributed as a document of the Commission on Population Development, under agenda item 1 of the provisional agenda of the forty-third session.

(*Signed*) Gabriela **Shalev**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative